

MARCH MEETING

First Speaker

Port of Dover – Delivering for Britain and Dover

A presentation by Tim Waggott, Chief Executive Port of Dover

Reported by Alan Lee

Along with Tim Waggott in attendance, to help answer questions, were Jack Goodhew, General Manager Special Projects and Richard Christian, Head of Communications at the Port of Dover.

Tim commenced with a broad outline of the Dover Western Docks Revival and the reasons for initiating the scheme. Then he gave some key statistics for the port. It handles £119bn of trade - 17% of the UK's trade in goods. Has on average 60 ferry sailings and transports up to 10,000 trucks per day. Five million vehicles a year use the port which handles the equivalent of 4 million containers of freight per year. This is more than Felixstowe - the UK's biggest container port? All these use Kent's strategic road network.

Freight increased by 30% between 2013 and 2015. 2014 and 2015 were record years then the uncertain future of post-Brexit trade, 2016 set another record. Together the Port of Dover and Eurotunnel handles £220bn of trade, 30% of the UK's trade in goods, over 4 million freight vehicles. Over 16,000 freight vehicles per day travel on Kent's roads. Dover is the 5th busiest terminal for passengers in the country and the 3rd for all passenger and freight movements behind only Heathrow and Gatwick.

By 2020 predictions are of a 40% growth in traffic with over 20,000 freight vehicles daily moving through Kent. The traffic must be kept moving, with the M2/A2 upgraded and a large investment put in infrastructure.

This will be essential to maximise the benefits of trading with Europe and to minimise the negative impacts of being a gateway county. This will ensure the prosperity of Dover and the nation as a whole. Government must remove all existing bottlenecks, the Dartford Crossing is partially or fully closed over 300 times a year and Kent always has major congestion issues with half of the nation's traffic heading to/from Dover getting stuck.

Tim is very concerned about the damage to trade that could be caused by Brexit and would like to maintain a frictionless border, have a long term IT solution and easy transitional arrangements. If we can solve Dover then other parts will be ok.

Tim expressed his annoyance at some of the obscene postings on line about the dredging of the Goodwin Sands also at some of the misinformation. He then said that 99.7% of the sands will be untouched and they have been dredged on numerous occasions since WWII. The aggregate will be from a very carefully selected site and collecting it there will have the least environmental impact. If collecting aggregate from the Goodwin Sands is not allowed it will cost £millions more, cost time, delay delivery of the Dover's regeneration and may mean an unfinished waterfront.

To end Tim stated "All of this opposition is driven by a group who live in Deal and have no interest in Dover. Our community must not be let down; please support us!"